

Department of the Treasury
2006
Interfaith Calendar



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Interfaith Calendar

Table of Contents

Month of January.....	Page 1
Month of February.....	Page 2
Month of March.....	Page 3
Month of April.....	Page 4
Month of May.....	Page 5
Month of June.....	Page 5
Month of July.....	Page 6
Month of August.....	Page 7
Month of September.....	Page 7
Month of October.....	Page 8
Month of November.....	Page 9
Month of December.....	Page 10
Definitions.....	Page 11

The Interfaith Calendar may not be all inclusive; however, it does provide a sound reference as you plan EEO events and special observances. Treasury EEO Officers should consult with their employees on the importance of various holidays and schedule events accordingly.

Interfaith Calendar 2006

JANUARY 2006

- 1
 - Mary, Mother of God - **Catholic Christian**
 - Feast Day of St Basil - **Orthodox Christian**
 - Shogatsu/Gantan-sai (New Years) - **Shinto**
- 5
 - Twelfth Night - **Christian**
 - Guru Gobindh Singh birthday - **Sikh**
- 6
 - Epiphany - **Christian**
 - Feast of the Epiphany (Theophany) - **Orthodox Christian**
 - Dia de los Reyes (Three Kings Day) - **Christian**
- 7
 - Feast of the Nativity - **Orthodox Christian**
- 8
 - Baptism of the Lord Jesus - **Christian**
 - Waqf al Arafa - **Islam**
 - Feast of the Holy Family - **Catholic Christian**
- 10
 - Waqf al Arafa (Hajj Day) - **Islam**
- 11
 - Eid al Adha - **Islam**
- 13
 - Maghi - **Sikh**
- 14
 - Mahayana Buddhist New Year - **Buddhist**
- 15
 - World Religion Day - **Baha'i**
- 17
 - Blessing of the Animals - **Hispanic Catholic Christian**
- 25
 - Conversion of St. Paul - **Christian**
- 29
 - Chinese New Year - **Confucian/Daoist/Buddhist**

JANUARY 2006 Cont.

- 31
 - Hijra - New Year - **Islam**

FEBRUARY 2006

- 2
 - Vasant Panchami ** - **Hindu**
 - Candlemas - Presentation of Christ in the Temple - **Christian**
 - Imbolc (Candlemas) - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**
- 3
 - St. Blaze Day - **Christian**
 - Setsebun (beginning of spring) - **Shinto**
- 5
 - Four Chaplains Sunday - **Interfaith**
- 8
 - Nirvana Day - **Buddhism**
- 9
 - Ashura - **Islam**
- 12
 - Triodion - **Orthodox Christian**
- 13
 - Tu B'shvat * - **Jewish**
- 14
 - St. Valentine's Day - **Christian**
- 15
 - Nirvana Day ** - **Buddhist**
- 26
 - Meat Fare Sunday - **Orthodox Christian**
 - Transfiguration Sunday - **Christian**
 - Maha Shivaratri ** - **Hindu**
- 28
 - Shrove Tuesday - **Christian**

MARCH 2006

- 1
 - Ash Wednesday - **Christian**
 - Lent begins - ends April 8 - **Christian**
 - St. David of Wales - **Christian**
- 5
 - Cheesefare Sunday - **Orthodox Christian**
- 6
 - Lent begins (Clean Monday) - **Orthodox Christian**
- 12
 - Orthodox Sunday - **Orthodox Christian**
- 14
 - Purim * - **Jewish**
 - Magha Puja Day ** - **Buddhist**
 - Holi ** - **Hindu**
- 15
 - Hola Mohalla - **Sikh**
- 17
 - St Patrick's Day - **Christian**
- 21
 - Norooz (New Year) - **Persian/Zoroastrian**
 - Naw-Rúz (New Year)- **Baha'i**
 - Ostara - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**
- 25
 - Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary - **Christian**
- 26
 - Khordad Sal (Birth of Prophet Zaranthushttra) **Zoroastrian**
- 30
 - Hindu New Year ** - **Hindu**
 - Ramayana begins (to April 6) ** - **Hindu**

APRIL 2006

- 6
 - Ramanavami (close of Ramayana) ** - **Hindu**
- 9
 - Palm/Passion Sunday - **Christian**
- 11
 - Mawlid an Nabi - **Islam**
- 12
 - Lord's Evening Meal - **Jehovah's Witness Christian**
- 13-20
 - Pesach (Passover) * - **Jewish**
- 13
 - Hanuman Jayanti ** - **Hindu**
 - Baisakhi - **Sikh**
 - Maundy Thursday - **Christian**
 - Therevadin Buddhist New Year - **Buddhist**
- 14
 - Good Friday - **Christian**
 - Baisakhi (Vaisakhi) - **Sikh**
- 15
 - Lazarus Saturday - **Orthodox Christian**
- 16
 - Easter - **Christian**
 - Palm Sunday - **Orthodox Christian**
- 21
 - Holy Friday - **Orthodox Christian**
 - First Day of Ridvan - **Baha'i**
- 23
 - Easter/Pascha - **Orthodox Christian**
 - St. George's Day - **Christian**
- 25
 - Yom HaSho'ah - **Jewish**
- 30
 - St. James the Great Day - **Orthodox Christian**

MAY 2006

- 1
 - Beltane - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**
- 2
 - Last day of Ridvan - **Baha'i**
- 3
 - Saints Philip & James - **Christian**
- 4
 - National Day of Prayer - USA - **Interfaith**
- 13
 - Buddha Day - Visakha Puja ** - **Buddhist**
- 16
 - Lag B'Omer - **Jewish**
- 23
 - Declaration of the Bab - **Baha'i**
- 25
 - Ascension of Christ - **Christian**
- 29
 - Ascension of Baha'u'llah - **Baha'i**
- 31
 - Ascension of Christ - **Orthodox Christian**

JUNE 2006

- 1
 - Ascension of Jesus - **Orthodox Christian**
- 2
 - Shavuot * - **Jewish**
- 4
 - Pentecost - **Christian**
- 9
 - St. Columba of Iona - **Celtic Christian**
- 11
 - Trinity - **Christian**
 - Pentecost - **Orthodox Christian**
- 15
 - Corpus Christi - **Catholic Christian**

JUNE 2006 Cont.

- 16
 - Guru Arjan martyrdom - **Sikh**
- 18
 - All Saints - **Orthodox Christian**
- 19
 - New Church Day - **Swedenborgian Christian**
- 21
 - First Nations Day - **Canadian Native People**
 - Litha Summer Solstice **Wicca/Neo Pagan**
- 23
 - Sacred Heart of Jesus- **Catholic Christian**
- 29
 - Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul - **Christian**

JULY 2006

- 9
 - Martyrdom of the Bab - **Baha'i**
- 11
 - St Benedict Day - **Catholic Christian**
 - Guru Purnima ** - **Hindu**
 - Asalha Puja Day ** - **Buddhist**
- 13
 - Obon (Ulambana) ** - **Buddhist/Shinto**
- 15
 - St. Vladimir the Great Day - **Orthodox Christian**
- 24
 - Pioneer Day- **Mormon Christian**
- 25
 - St. James the Great Day - **Christian**

AUGUST 2006

- 1
 - Lammas - **Christian**
 - Lughnassad (Lammas) - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**
 - Fast in honor of Holy Mother of Lord Jesus - **Orthodox Christian**
- 3
 - Tisha B'av * - **Jewish**
- 4
 - Raksha Bandhan ** - **Hindu**
- 6
 - Transfiguration of the Lord - **Orthodox Christian**
- 15
 - Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary - **Catholic Christian**
 - Dormition of the Theotokos - **Orthodox Christian**
- 16
 - Krishna Janmashtami ** - **Hindu**
- 22
 - Lailat al Miraj - **Islam**
- 27
 - Ganesa Chaturthi ** - **Hindu**
- 29
 - Beheading of St. John the Baptist - **Christian**

SEPTEMBER 2006

- 1
 - Religious year begins - **Orthodox Christian**
- 8
 - Nativity of Virgin Mary - **Christian**
- 9
 - Lailat al Bara'ah ** - **Islam**
- 14
 - Elevation of the Life Giving Cross (Holy Cross) - **Christian**
- 21
 - Fall Equinox - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**

SEPTEMBER 2006 Cont.

- 23
 - Rosh Hashana * - **Jewish**
 - Navaratri begins (to October 21) ** - **Hindu**
- 24
 - Ramadan begins (through Oct. 23) - **Islam**
- 29
 - Michael and All Angels - **Christian**

OCTOBER 2006

- 1
 - Navaratri ends ** - **Hindu**
- 2
 - Dasera ** - **Hindu**
 - Yom Kippur * - **Jewish**
- 4
 - St Francis Day - **Catholic Christian**
 - Blessing of the Animals - **Christian**
- 7-13 (6-7 Primary Obligation Days)
 - Sukkot * - **Jewish**
- 14
 - Shemini Atzeret * - **Jewish**
- 15
 - Simchat Torah * - **Jewish**
- 18
 - St. Luke, Apostle & Evangelist - **Christian**
- 20
 - Birth of the B'ab - **Baha'i**
 - Laylat el qadr - **Islam**
 - Quds Day - **Islam**
 - Jummatul Wida - **Islam**
 - Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth - **Sikh**
- 21
 - Diwali (Deepavali) ** - **Hindu, Sikh**
- 24
 - Eid al Fitr - **Islam**

OCTOBER 2006 Cont.

- 28
 - Milvian Bridge Day - **Christian**
- 31
 - All Hallows Eve - **Christian**
 - Reformation Day - **Protestant Christian**
 - Samhain - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**
 - Deep Diwali - **Jain**

NOVEMBER 2006

- 1
 - All Saints' Day - **Christian**
- 2
 - All Souls' Day - **Catholic Christian**
- 5
 - Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib - **Sikh**
- 12
 - Birth of Baha'u'llah - **Baha'i**
- 15
 - Nativity Fast begins - ends Dec. 24 - **Orthodox Christian**
- 23
 - Thanksgiving - **Interfaith**
- 24
 - Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahdur - **Sikh**
- 26
 - Christ the King - **Christian**
 - Day of the Covenant - **Baha'i**
- 28
 - Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha - **Baha'i**
- 30
 - St. Andrew's Day - **Christian**

DECEMBER 2006

- 3,10,17,24
 - Advent - Sundays of... - **Christian**
- 8
 - Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) - **Buddhism**
 - Immaculate Conception of Mary - **Catholic Christian**
- 12
 - Feast day - Our Lady of Guadalupe - **Catholic Christian**
- 16-24
 - Hanukkah * - **Jewish**
- 16-25
 - Posadas Navidenas - **Hispanic Christian**
- 21
 - Yule - **Christian**
 - Yule/Winter Solstice * - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**
- 24
 - Christmas Eve - **Christian**
- 25
 - Christmas * - **Christian**
 - Feast of the Nativity ** - **Orthodox Christian**
- 26
 - Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra) **Zoroastrian**
 - St Stephen's Day - **Christian**
- 28
 - Holy Innocents - **Christian**
- 30
 - Holy Family - **Catholic Christian**
 - Waqf al Arafa (Hajj Day) - **Islam**
- 31
 - Watch Night - **Christian**
 - Feast of the Holy Family - **Catholic Christian**
 - Eid al Adha - **Islam**

* *Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date.*

** *Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date.*

Interfaith Calendar Definition of Terms*

- Advent
 - Christian time of preparation for observing the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent begins on the Sunday nearest November 30 and is the beginning of the Christian worship year. Advent is observed with the lighting of advent candles, display of wreaths, and special ceremonies. Advent also anticipates the coming again to earth of Jesus Christ. The season continues through December 24.
- Al-Hijra
 - Islamic remembrance of the migration of Muhammad and followers to Medina in 622 c.e. and establishment of first Islamic state. No specific religious rituals are observed. Beginning of Islamic calendar year.
- All Hallow's Eve
 - Christian celebration of mystery combining prayers and merriment involving children and families. It is a prelude to All Saint's Day.
- All Saints Day
 - Christian day for honoring saints, known and unknown. In general, saints are persons with reputation for unusual lives of holiness and devotion to God or who were martyred for their faith. A Holy Day of Obligation in the Roman Catholic Church where saints have special formal status.
- All Souls Day
 - Christian day of prayers of remembrance and intercession for the dead. Prayers of the faithful are seen as helping to cleanse the souls for the vision of God in heaven.
- Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 - Christian celebration of Gabriel announcing to the Virgin Mary the coming birth of Jesus as the Incarnation of Creator God.
- Asala (Turning of the Wheel of Teaching)
 - Buddhist observance of the day when Gautama Buddha made his first public proclamation to five ascetics. He taught the middle way, the noble eight-fold path and the four noble truths.
- Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha
 - Baha'i celebration of the rising of the spirit of Abdu'l-Baha to the heavenly dwelling.
- Ascension of Baha'u'llah
 - Baha'i recollection of the death of Baha'u'llah, the founder. Observed by prayers and readings. Work is suspended.
- Ascension of Jesus
 - Christian recognition of the departure of Jesus from earth after the resurrection. It is perhaps the earliest observed celebration in Christianity. It is observed with worship including prayers and music.
- Ash Wednesday
 - Christian observance to begin the 40 day season of Lent. Ashes are marked on worshippers as a sign of penitence.

- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 - Roman Catholic Christian observance commemorating the belief that the Blessed Virgin Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven at the end of her earthly life.
- Ashura
 - An Islamic optional one day fast recognizing the Creation, Noah's departure from the ark, and the saving of Moses from Pharaoh. Prophet Muhammad's Grandson, Hussain, was martyred on this date in 683/684 AD.
- Ayyam-I-Ha
 - Baha'i beginning of a series of special days (Intercalary Days) that balance out the calendar. It is observed by hospitality and acts of charity.

B

- Baisakhi (Vaisakhi)
 - Hindu start of the New Years. Greetings that wish good life in coming days are exchanged. In Sikhi the day commemorates the founding of the Khalsa, a distinctive Sikh brotherhood.
- Baptism of Jesus
 - Christian commemoration of the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus.
- Beheading of John the Baptist
 - Christian remembrance of the death of John who is known for preparing the people so they would recognize Jesus as the Messiah.
- Beltane
 - Wicca celebration of the conjoining of the goddess with the energy of the god in the sacred marriage which is the basis of all creation.
- Birth of the Bab
 - Baha'i honoring of the founder of the Babi religion, forerunner to Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i faith.
- Birth of Baha'u'llah
 - Baha'i celebration of the birth of their founder and teacher. Refrain from work.
- Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji
 - Sikh honoring of the birthday of their founder.
- Blessing of the Animals
 - Christian observance of showing respect for the domestic animals that mean much to people. Observed on various dates - especially related to St. Francis.
- Bodhi Day
 - Buddhist celebration of the time when Prince Gautama took his place under the Bodhi tree, vowing to remain there until he attained supreme enlightenment.

- Bon Festival
 - Shinto ancestral soul's day. People visit graveyards to recall the souls of ancestors. Families enjoy special meals.
- Buddha Day
 - Buddhists celebrate the birthday of Buddha

C

- Candlemas
 - Christian celebration of the presentation of young Jesus in the temple to the aged Simeon. New beginnings are recognized. Candles are lighted.
 - Wicca (pagan) celebration of the return of the sun and lengthening of days.
- Christ the King
 - Christian celebration of the preeminence of Jesus over all earthly authorities.
- Christmas
 - A season of the Christian year following Advent and preceding Epiphany.
- Christmas Day
 - Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Observed by prayers, exchanging of gifts, and family parties.
- Christmas Eve
 - Christian celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. It is observed with worship, candle lighting, manger scenes and festive meals.
- Christmas Fast
 - Orthodox Christian fasting period in preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus Christ.
- Circumcision of Jesus
 - Christian recognition of its Jewish foundations. The infant Jesus was brought to the Temple for the ritual act of circumcision.
- Conversion/Confession of St Peter
 - Christian recognition of the classic words of St Peter who responded to a question by Jesus and described him as the long awaited messiah.
- Conversion of St Paul
 - Christian observance of the experience of the Paul when he was confronted by a vision of Jesus while on his way to persecute Christians and became a leading presenter of Jesus. Observed at worship services.
- Corpus Christi
 - Christian (Roman Catholic) celebration in recognition of the Eucharist - the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. The real presence of the body and blood of Jesus is honored.

D

- Dalai Lama birthday
 - Buddhist observance with traditional dances, picnics and singing. Each Dalai Lama is seen as reincarnation of predecessor.
- Dasa Laxana
 - Jain observance with focus on the holy texts describing the ten characteristics to which devotees aspire.
- Dassera
 - Hindu celebration of victory and valor. Lord Rama is remembered as winning a victory over evil.
- Day of Hajj
 - Islamic observance of the revelation to Mohammed on Mt Arafat.
- Day of the Covenant
 - Baha'i celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah
- Day of the Covenant
 - Baha'i celebration of the covenant given in the last will and testament of Baha'u'llah
- Death of Guru Nanak Dev
 - Sikh observance of the passing of the first great Guru
- Declaration of the Bab
 - Baha'i recognition of the declaration in 1844 by Ali Muhammed that he is the anticipated "Coming One" of all religions. Work is suspended.
- Deep Diwali
 - Jain commemoration of the liberation of Mahavira from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth.
- Deepavali
 - Hindu celebration - a five day festival of lights marking the end of the Hindu year. First day is observed as a holiday by many Hindu people.
- Diwali
 - Hindu Festival of Lights symbolizing the human urge to move toward the light. Gift exchanges, fireworks and festive meals.
- Dharma Day
 - Buddha's first discourse following his enlightenment.
- Dormition (falling asleep) of the Theotokos
 - Orthodox Christian commemoration of the death and burial of the Virgin Mary.
- Dussehra
 - Hindu festival celebrating the victory of good over evil. Goddess Durga and Lord Rama prevail over the demons. Prayers for blessings and favor are offered.

E

- Easter
 - The most holy of Christian sacred days. The day commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from his death by crucifixion. Observances include worship services beginning at sunrise, special music, feasting, and parades.
- Eid ul-Adha
 - Islamic Feast of Sacrifice. The most important feast of Islam. It concludes the Hajj and is a three-day festival recalling Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah.
- Eid ul Fitr ('Id al-Fitr)
 - Islamic event marking the close of Ramadan. It is a festival of thanksgiving to Allah for enjoying the month of Ramadan. It involves wearing finest clothing, saying prayers, and fostering understanding with other religions.
- Epiphany
 - Christian commemoration of the manifestations of the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The homage of the magi to the infant Jesus is honored by some. For others the Baptism of Jesus is the remembered event. A season of the Christian year from the close of Christmas to the beginning of Lent.
- Exaltation of the Life-giving Cross
 - Orthodox Christian celebration of the finding by St Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, of the Cross upon which Christ was crucified.

F

- Fall Equinox
 - Wicca observance of the change of seasons.
- Falling Asleep (Dormition) of the Theotokos
 - Orthodox Christian observance of the death, burial, resurrection and transfer to heaven of the Virgin Mary.
- Fasali
 - The Zoroastrian seasonal calendar - "fasal" means "season". These dates remain unchanged from year to year.
- Fast in honor of the Holy Mother of Lord Jesus
 - Orthodox Christian 14 day fasting period in preparation for the celebration of the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary..
- Feast of the Holy Apostles
 - Christian - The martyrdom of Saint Peter and Saint Paul recognized.
- Feast of St Basil
 - Orthodox Christian commemoration of St Basil the Great, who wrote a Eucharist Liturgy which bears his name.
- Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe
 - Catholic Christian honoring of a legendary appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531 c.e.

- Feast of Mithra
 - Zoroastrian festival with focus on Mithra as the angel of light. From ancient times in Iran it has been a time of gratitude for life and light.
- Feast of the Theophany
 - Orthodox Christian Feast to recall the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the baptism of the Lord.
- First Parkash
 - The Sikh scripture, Adi Granth, is installed in the Golden Temple.
- First Nations Day
 - Canadian First Nations (Indian, Metis and Inuit) most sacred day on the summer solstice. Communities hold feasts and invite guests.
- Founding of the Church
 - Mormon Christian commemoration of the appearance of the angel Moroni in 1830 to Joseph Smith. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day saints began at this time.
- Four Chaplains Day
 - Commemoration of the event in World War II when four Chaplains of Jewish and Christian traditions (Catholic and Protestant) gave their life jackets to others as a troop ship sank in the Atlantic Ocean.

G

- Ganesa Chaturthi
 - A Hindu festival honoring the god of prosperity, prudence and success. Images of Ganesa are worshipped.
- Ganga Dussehra
 - Hindu honoring of the sacred river Ganga which flows from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal.
- Gantan-sai
 - Shinto New Year festival observed with prayers for inner renewal, prosperity and health.
- Ghambar Maidyozarem
 - Zoroastrian celebration of the creation of the sky and the harvest of winter crops.
- Gion Matsuri
 - Shinto honoring of the sun god with parades, music and story telling.
- Gita Jayanti
 - Hindu celebration of birthday of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and the revelation of the Gospel of Dharma to the world.
- Good Friday
 - Christian remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus and related events.
- Guru Arjan Dev Martyrdom
 - Sikh time of remembering those who have suffered for the faith. Observed by reading the Guru Granth Sahib.

- Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday
 - Sikh honoring of the birth of the founder of the Khalsa who lived from 1469 -1539 c.e.
- Guru Granth Sahib Installation
 - Sikh remembrance of the eternal installation of the holy books, Granth Sahib.
- Guru Nanak's Day
 - Sikh honoring of the birth of the first Sikh teacher who lived from 1469 - 1539 c.e. Sacred readings, prayers, hymns, meals together.
- Guru Purnima
 - Hindu celebration of the ancient Gurus, in particular Sage Ved Vyas. A Guru is seen as a remover of darkness, a teacher. The date is the full moon of the month Asadha.
- Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom
 - Sikh time of remembering the execution of Teg Bahadur by the Moghul Emperor in India.

H

- Hana Matsuri
 - Japanese Buddhist flower festival invoking a plentiful harvest.
- Hanukkah
 - Jewish Festival of Lights. It commemorates the Maccabean recapture and rededication of the Jerusalem Temple in 165-164 b.c.e. Special readings and praise songs focus on liberty and freedom. The eight candle Menorah is lighted
- Hajj
 - Islamic pilgrimage rites at Mecca on 7-12th days of month of Dhu al-Hajja. Concludes with Eid ul Adha when those not traveling to Mecca take part.
- Hanuman Jayanti
 - Hindu celebration of Hanuman who was an embodiment of Lord Rama. Devotion and selfless work are encouraged.
- Holi
 - Hindu spring festival dedicated to the god of pleasure. It is observed in a colorful and boisterous manner. People shower each other with colored water and smear red and green powder on each other.
- Hola Mohalla
 - A Sikh day when mock battles are fought and martial arts are displayed.
- Holy Cross Day
 - A Christian Day of recognition for the Cross on which Jesus was crucified as a central symbol of the Christian religion.
- Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, Joseph
 - Catholic Christian celebration of the love between the family of Jesus.

- Holy Innocents Day
 - Christian day of solemn memory of male children killed by King Herod in the attempt to destroy Jesus.
- Holy Pascha
 - Orthodox Christian feast day of the resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ.
- Holy Thursday
 - Christian observance of the final meal that Jesus observed with his disciples. It is usually observed with the Sacrament of Holy Communion or a special Mass celebrating the institution of the Eucharist.
- Holy Saturday
 - Christian observance of the Saturday before Easter - a time meditation on the mystery of Jesus Christ.
- Holy Week
 - Christians observe the week before Easter with solemn ceremonies based on events in Jesus' life, especially on Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

I

- 'Id al-Adha
 - Islamic day to remember Abraham and the almost sacrifice of Isaac.. Meat is given to the poor.
- 'Id al-Fitr (Eid ul Fitr)
 - A 3 day Islamic fast marking the close of Ramadan. It is a festival of thanksgiving to Allah for enjoying the month of Ramadan. It involves wearing finest clothing, saying prayers, and fostering understanding with other religions.
- Imbolc
 - Wicca reflection on the power of the gods from which physical and spiritual harvest will come.
- Immaculate Conception
 - Catholic Christian day of celebrating the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was preserved from original sin all of her life. A day of obligation and required church attendance.
- Immaculate Heart of Mary
 - Catholic Christian honoring of Mary, mother of Jesus.

J

- Jashan-e Sadeh (Sadeh)
 - Zoroastrian mid winter celebration in which a bonfire is often used to express defiance of the cold of winter.
- Janmashtami
 - Hindu celebration of the birthday of Krishna. Nightlong prayers are held in the Temples. A two day observance.
- Jummatul Wida
 - Islamic last Friday of Ramadan observance.

K

- Kathina
 - Buddhist monks end a three month rain retreat and are given new robes. Friends and family join to celebrate harmony.
- Khordad Sal
 - Zoroastrian remembrance of the birth of Prophet Zarathushtra.
- Krishna Jayanti (Sri Krishna Janmashtami)
 - Hindu commemoration of the birth of Krishna - the 8th incarnation of god Vishnu who took the form of Krishna to destroy the evil king Kansa.
- Kwanzaa
 - An African American and Pan-African holiday celebrating family, community and culture, Kwanzaa is observed in many religious communities. Seven life virtues are presented.

L

- Lag B'Omer
 - Jewish observation of the counting of the day - the link - between Pesach and Shavout.
- Lailat al-Miraj & Israa'
 - Islamic observance of Mohammed's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven.
- Lailat al Bara'ah (Shab-Barat)
 - Islamic Night of Forgiveness. A night of prayer to Allah for forgiveness of the dead. Preparation for Ramadan through intense prayer.
- Lailat ul-Qadr
 - Islamic Night of Destiny. First revelation of Qur'an to Prophet Mohammed. Observed during the last ten days of Ramadan. Prayers to Allah for a good destiny
- Lammas
 - Christian first fruits celebration observed by placing bread baked from first harvest on the altar. From the Celtic Christian tradition.
- Lazarus Saturday
 - Orthodox Christian celebration of the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus, celebrated on the eve of Palm Sunday; revealing that Jesus in "the resurrection and life" of all mankind..
- Lent
 - A Christian time of reflection and preparation for Holy Week and Easter. A forty day time of intense devotion, it is observed by fasting, frequent worship and acts of charity. The season begins on Ash Wednesday.
- Lilitu's Night
 - Pagan Temple Zagduku honoring of dark patron, Lilitu.
- Litha
 - Wicca celebration of the sacred marriage in which energy of the gods is poured into the service of life.

- (The) Lord's Evening Meal
 - Jehovah's Witness (Christian) primary annual celebration taking place in the evening.
- Los Posadas
 - Christian Traditional Latino celebration re-enacting the search by Joseph for a room at an inn for Mary to give birth to Jesus.
- Lughnasadh
 - Wicca/neo pagan observance of first harvest of the year involving agricultural festivals and prosperity magic. The Christian name of Lammas is sometimes used.

M

- Mabon
 - Wicca observance of the autumnal equinox when day and night are of equal length. A harvest festival time.
- Magha Puja Day
 - Buddhist celebration of the presentation of teachings by Lord Buddha to and assembly of holy men.
- Maghi
 - Sikh commemoration of a battle in which forty Sikhs died for Guru Gobindh Singh Ji.
- Mahavir Jayanti
 - Jain festival honoring Lord Mahavira on the founder's birthday. Shrines are visited.
- Maha Shivaratri
 - A Hindu festival in honor of Lord Shiva and his marriage to Goddess Parvati. Ceremonies involving prayers and hymns take place mostly at night. Special foods are not used.
- Maidgoshahem
 - Zoroastrian joyous mid summer feast relating to the creation of the waters. Rituals, prayers and sharing food.
- Maidyarem Gahambar
 - Zoroastrian winter feast involving rituals, prayers and sharing of food.
- Makar Sakranti
 - A Hindu celebration marking turning of the sun toward the north. Observed by flying kites, feeding the poor and offering libations to the dead.
- Martyrdom of the Bab
 - Baha'i - Ali Mohammed was executed in 1850 by Persian political and religious powers. Observed by abstaining from commerce and work.
- Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev
 - Sikh time of remembering those who have suffered for the faith. Observed by reading the Guru Granth Sahib.

- Martyrdom of John the Baptist
 - Christian observance to remember the beheading of John who challenged the moral life of King Herod.
- Mary, Mother of God
 - Catholic Christian - a celebration of the mother of Jesus.
- Mawlid el-Nabi
 - Islamic commemoration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, in about 570 c.e. Not universally observed. The prophet's teachings are read and religious meetings are held.
- Maunajiyaras
 - Jain day of fasting, silence, and meditation on the five holy teachers.
- Maundy Thursday
 - Christian observance of the first Lord's Supper during Holy Week.
- Meatfare (Judgement) Sunday
 - Orthodox Christian observance, two weeks before the start of the Great Lent, preparing the faithful for the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. This is the last day for eating of meat before the Great Lent.
- Midsummer
 - Wicca/neo pagan observance of the bounty of nature. Fires are lit in honor of the Sun.
- Milvian Bridge Day
 - Christian day of solemn reflection on the relationship of the spiritual community and the powers of civil government. On Oct 28, 312 c.e., Emperor Constantine prevailed in a battle and proceeded to make Christianity the legal religion of the Roman Empire.

N

- Nativity of Mary, the Mother of God
 - Christian celebration of birth of the Virgin Mary.
- Nativity of St John the Baptist
 - Christian celebration of the role of John in baptizing Jesus. Continues a pre Christian Midsummer's Day celebration. Special interest for Hispanic tradition.
- Navaratri Dusserha
 - Hindu Festival of the divine mother honoring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. Also observed as a celebration recalling the days of Lord Krishna.
- Nav Ruz
 - Zoroastrian New Years observance
- Naw Ruz
 - Baha'i observance of the vernal equinox symbolizing spiritual growth and renewal.

- New Church Day
 - Swedenborgian Christian (Church of the New Jerusalem) annual commemoration of the vision document, "The True Christian Religion", by Emanuel Swedenborg in 1770.
- New Year (Islam)
 - The Islamic cycle of months begins. Formulas determine holy days based on lunar events.
- Nichiren Daishonin Memorial
 - Buddhist memory of Nichiren Daishonin and the Dai-Gohonzon, the true object of worship, for all humanity.
- Nineteen Day Fast
 - Baha'i Fast to be observed by adult Baha'is in good health - sunrise to sundown - no food or drink.
- Ninth Day of Ridvan
 - Baha'i celebration of the arrival of Baha'u'llah at a sacred garden.
- Nirvana Day
 - Buddhist - a regional observance of the death of Buddha.
- Noche Buena
 - Christian Latino Christmas Eve family celebration.
- Norooz (The New Day)
 - Zoroastrian New Year.
- Nuzulul Qur'an (Laylat al-Qadr)
 - Islamic Night of Power during final days of Ramadan. A night spent in worship to mark the first revelation of the Qur'an.

O

- Obon Festival
 - Japanese Buddhist festival to honor deceased ancestors. Involves lighting of bonfires, traditional meals, paper lanterns, folk dances.
- Oh-harai-taisai
 - Shinto Grand Purification Ceremony. Observed twice yearly to obtain purification from offenses committed during each half of the year.
- Orthodox Sunday
 - Orthodox Christian first sunday of Lent. Restoration of icons to the church is celebrated.
- Ostara
 - Wicca welcoming of spring and the goddess-as-maiden.

P

- Paitishahem Gahambar
 - Zoroastrian festival commemorating the creation of the earth and the harvesting of summer crops.

- Palm Sunday
 - Christian celebration of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The day begins Holy Week. It is observed by worship celebrations and parades using palm branches.
- Parinirvana
 - Buddhist observance of the entry of Buddha into the final nirvana - a state of complete detachment.
- Paryushana Parva
 - Jain 8 day festival signifying human emergence into a new world of spiritual and moral refinement. Marked by recitations from Jain sacred writing and family exchange of cards and letters.
- Pavarana Day
 - A Buddhist festival marking the end of the Rains Retreat, primarily observed by monks in monasteries.
- Passover
 - Jewish 8-day celebration of the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. The story of the Exodus is recounted, and the ongoing struggle of all peoples for freedom from internal and external tyranny is celebrated. A special meal is a central feature.
- Pentecost
 - Christian observation of the day when the God the Holy Spirit came to the disciples in the forms of tongues of fire and rushing wind. It is a traditional day for baptism and confirmation of new Christians.
- Pioneer Day
 - Mormon observation of arrival of first settlers at Great Salt Lake, USA, on July 24, 1847.
- Posadas Perpetual (Navideñas)
 - Hispanic Christian feast of The Lodgings commemorating the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem in preparation for the birth of Jesus.
- Precious Blood of Jesus
 - Christian (Roman Catholic) veneration of the life giving power of the blood of Jesus.
- Presentation of Jesus
 - Christian remembrance of the infant Jesus being brought to the temple in Jerusalem. His Godly presence was recognized. Celebrate at worship services.
- Purim
 - Jewish celebration of the deliverance of the Jewish minority in Persia from genocide. Charity to the poor, sharing food with friends, and vigorous merrymaking mark the observance.

Q

- Quds Day
 - A somewhat controversial Islamic observance. The word "Quds" is Arabic for Jerusalem. The day recalls the travels of Prophet Mohamed from Medina to Jerusalem and to Heaven.

R

- Raksha Bandhan
 - Hindu festival honoring the loving ties between brothers and sister in a family.
- Ramadan
 - 9th month on Islamic calendar, devoted to the commemoration of Muhammad's reception of the divine revelation recorded in the Qur'an. The event begins when authorities in Saudi Arabia sight the new moon of the 9th month. It is the holiest period of the Islamic Year. There is strict fasting from sunrise to sunset.
- Rama Krishna Jayanti (Sri Krishna Jayanti)
 - Hindu celebration of the birthday of Sri Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Krishna. Sweets, fruits and milk products are available in abundance.
- Ramanavmi
 - Hindu celebration of the birth of Lord Rama, hero of the religious epic poem, The Ramayana. The day involves telling of stories and going to the temple.
- Reformation Day
 - Protestant Christian anniversary of their tradition and its emphasis on the place of the Bible and religious freedom. On October 31, 1517 c.e. Martin Luther posted a belief statement on Wittenberg Church door.
- Ridvan
 - Baha'i commemoration of the twelve day period in 1863 when Baha'u'llah declared that he was God's messenger for this age. Work is to be suspended on days 1, 9, and 12 of the festival.
- Rogation Sunday
 - Christian occasion to ask God to bless the land for growing crops and to also ask forgiveness of sins.
- Rohatsu
 - Buddhist celebration of the enlightenment of Buddha.
- Rosh Hashanah
 - Jewish New Year. A time of introspection, abstinence, prayer and penitence. The story of Abraham is read, the ram's horn is sounded, and special foods are prepared and shared.

S

- Sacred Heart
 - Christian (Roman Catholic) occasion to pay homage to Christ's all encompassing love for humanity. Solemn worship is observed.
- Sadeh (Jashan-e Sadeh)
 - Zoroastrian mid winter celebration in which a bonfire is often used to express defiance of the cold of winter.
- Saint Andrew's Day
 - Christian observance of the coming of Christianity to the area now known as Scotland. The martyrdom of St Andrew is remembered as the season of Advent is about to begin.
- Saint Benedict Day
 - Catholic Christian recognition of the father of the Benedictine Order. It was the first Order of the Western Church Monastic tradition and lived by the Benedictine Rule.
- Saint Blaze Day
 - Christian, primarily Catholic and Orthodox, honored of a 4th century saint by blessing the throats of believers.
- Saint Brigid of Kildare
 - Christian recognition of Brigid who displayed unusual compassion. She was brought up as a Druid and became Christian.
- Saint Columba of Iona
 - Christian recognition of Columba who began the famous community of Iona off the coast of Scotland in 563.
- Saint David of Wales
 - Celtic Christian saint known for his wisdom and missionary work.
- Saint Francis Day
 - Christian recognition of service to people and appreciation of the natural world, as practiced by St Francis and the Franciscan Monastic Order which he founded.
- Saint George Day
 - Christian remembrance of a person who, in the 4th century, was a martyr and became an ideal of martial valor and selflessness. Legend of killing a dragon is connected with this patron saint of England.
- Saint James Day
 - Christian recognition of the martyrdom of the Apostle James the Great in 44 c.e
- Saint Matthew Day
 - Christian remembrance Matthew - apostle, evangelist and martyr of the first century.
- Saint Michael and All Angels
 - Christian celebration of angels as companions who help fight off the power of evil and who are present at the hour of death.

- Saint Patrick's Day
 - Christian celebration of Patrick who brought Christianity to Ireland in early days of the faith.
- Saint Peter Day
 - Catholic Christian honoring of the disciple chosen by Jesus to give leadership to the church.
- Saint Philip the Apostle & St James the Less
 - Catholic Christian remembrance of two disciples of Jesus.
- Saint Stephen's Day
 - Christian remembrance of St Stephen, the first Christian martyr.
- Saint Valentine's Day
 - Christian celebration of the love of God presented in Jesus and in the lives of Christian believers. St Valentine was a 3rd century martyr. This day is widely observed in the USA as a secular celebration of love.
- Samhain
 - Wicca celebration of endings and beginnings. Revering of elders is observed.
- Setsubun-sai
 - Shinto celebration of the change of seasons with the coming of spring with shouts of "Devils out, Good Fortune in". Bean throwing protects against demons.
- Shavuot
 - Jewish celebration of Moses' descent from Mt Sinai with the Ten Commandments. Plants and flowers are used in decorations.
- Shemini Azteret
 - Jewish completion of the annual cycle of reading of the Torah.
- Shivarat (Mahasivaratri)
 - Hindu worship of Shiva with flowers.
- Shogatsu (Gantan-sai)
 - Shinto New Year's Day celebration.
- Shree Krishan Jayanti (Janmastami)
 - Hindu celebration of the physical courage and mental brilliance of Krishna, great savior and founder of *dharma*, the religious and moral law of Hinduism.
- Shrove Tuesday
 - Christian carnival day on the eve of Ash Wednesday which begins Lent, a time of fasting and devotions. Pancakes are often served. It is also known as Fat Tuesday in some places.
- Shubun-sai
 - Shinto vernal equinox observance.

- Simchat Torah
 - Jewish day to celebrate the reading of the Law. Synagogue services involve readings, processions and blessing of the children.
- Slichot
 - Jewish worship service to begin making repentance for wrongs done the past year.
- Spring Ohigon
 - Buddhist time of meditation on the teachings of Buddha at the equinox.
- Sri Ramakrishna Jayanti
 - Hindu celebration of the life of Sri Ramakrishna whose life was a constant contemplation of God. He exemplified the best in seers of India.
- Sukkot
 - Jewish Feast of Tabernacles which celebrates the harvest and the protection of the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness dwelling in tents. Temporary dwelling places have leaves for a roof so the sky can be seen. In temperate climates, night is spent in the Succoth.

T

- Tammuz, Seventeenth of
 - Jewish traditional day of fasting to mourn over Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. Not universally observed.
- Thanksgiving
 - Interfaith celebration of the created earth. Celebrated in the USA.
- Theophany (Feast of...)
 - Orthodox Christian celebration of the Baptism of Jesus, at which time the Trinity was revealed to the world.
- Tiragan
 - Zoroastrian celebration in honor of Tishtat - the Dog Star. Recognizes dogs as helpers of humanity. May involve splashing people with water.
- Tishah B'av
 - A Jewish day of fasting in remembrance of the destruction of the Temple in 586 b.c.e. and 70 c.e.
- Tohji-Taisai
 - Shinto Grand Ceremony of the Winter Solstice.
- Transfiguration of Jesus
 - Christian commemoration of the experience on Mt Tabor when Jesus' physical appearance became brilliant as his connection with traditional Jewish holy figures became evident to the disciples.
- Trinity Sunday or Day
 - Christians honor the belief in one God with a threefold nature.
- Triodion
 - Orthodox Christian time period leading up to Lent. The liturgy involves hymns, odes and scriptures.

- Tu B'Av
 - Jewish celebration of romance between couples.
- Tu B'shevat
 - Jewish celebration of the coming of spring by preparation of foods native to Israel. It is also known as "New Year for Trees" - a method for determining the age of trees for tithing purposes.
- Tulsedas Jayanti
 - Hindu remembrance of the poet Tulsedas as one who brought spiritual uplift to the masses of people.
- Twelfth Night
 - Christian observance of the close of Christmastide.

U

- Ugadi (ugAdhi)
 - Hindu New Years Day for Telugu people and those of Andhra Pradesh. It is said that Lord Brahma began the creation on this day. It is one of at least eight New Year observances in regions on India.
- Ullambana
 - Buddhist celebration of the ritual of saving the deceased from torments after death.

V

- Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)
 - Hindu solar new year. For Sikhs the day remembers Guru Gobind Singh and the founding of the militant fraternity of Sikhs named Kahlsa. The day is observed by temple worship, feasting and dancing.
- Vasant Panchami
 - Hindu celebration dedicated to Saraswati, goddess of learning.
- Visakha Puja
 - Buddhist marking of the birth, enlightenment and death (attainment of Nirvana) of Lord Buddha.
- Vivekananda Jayanti
 - Hindu celebration of the birthday of Swami Vivekananda who was dedicated to bridging the gap between east and west.

W

- Waqf al Arafah
 - Islamic observance day during Hajj when pilgrims pray for forgiveness and mercy.

- Watch Night
 - Christian occasion to thank God for bringing people safely through another year. Developed by the African American community in the USA at the time of Emancipation (1863).
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
 - Christian observance with prayer for the restoration of unity between the churches of the faith.
- Wesak
 - Holiest of Buddhist holy days. It celebrates Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It is a public holiday in some countries.
- Whitsunday
 - Alternate name for Pentecost, the Christian celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the community of the faithful. White robes are used in worship.
- Winter Lent
 - Orthodox Christian season of preparation for the Nativity of Christ.
- World Communion Sunday
 - Protestant Christian observation of the unity of Christians in celebration of the last supper of Jesus with the disciples.
- World Religion Day
 - Baha'i sponsored day dedicated to the unity and oneness of all world religions.

Y

- Yom Hashoah
 - Jewish Holocaust Day. The day has been established to remember the six million Jews killed by the Nazis in 1933-45. It is observed by many non-Jews as well.
- Yom Kippur
 - Jewish Day of Atonement. This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with strict fasting and ceremonial repentance.
- Yule
 - A Christian celebration of the light dawning in Jesus. Also a Norse pagan celebration of the winter-born king, symbolized by the rebirth of the sun. A present day Wicca event.

Z

- Zarathosht Diso
 - Zoroastrian anniversary of the death of Prophet Zarathushtra.

** Many sources were used for these definitions. They include books, web sites, individuals, and journal articles. Regional and sectarian uses of terms differ considerably.*